

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-12 /097 W
-----106162 240709Z /20

R 231740Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9487
INFO USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, UR, US, XF, PLO
SUBJECT: SOVIET ACADEMIC DISCUSSES M.E.

SUMMARY: SOVIET M.E. EXPERT ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN AL-FATAH RAID NEAR TEL AVIV, BUT DOES NOT CONDONE IT, REFUSES TO SEE ANY IMMEDIATE HOPE IN PRESENT M.E. SITUATION AND, IN GENERAL, REFLECTS A GLOOMY, RESIGNED MOOD IN WHICH NO HINT OF NEW IDEAS CAN BE DISCERNED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MARCH 22 CALL ON A. K. KISLOV, CHIEF OF U.S. M.E. POLICY SECTION OF USA INSTITUTE, EMBOFF FOUND HIM IN UNUSUALLY PESSIMISTIC, RESIGNED MOOD. KISLOV SEEMED OBSESSED WITH PROBLEM OF ALLEGED U.S. PERfidY AS REPRESENTED BY U.S. BACKING AWAY FROM LETTER AND SPIRIT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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JOINT SOVIET-U.S. STATEMENT ON M.E. OF OCT. 1, 1977.
SOVIETS WERE, HE ADMITTED, SUSPICIOUS OF U.S. M.E.
POLICY IN GENERAL, ESPECIALLY AFTER KISSINGER SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY EXPERIENCE, AND WHEN THEY SEE YET ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO EXCLUDE SOVIET UNION FROM NEGOTIATING PROCESS (I.E., U.S. SUPPORT OF SADAT'S INITIATIVES) THEN THEY ARE DOUBLY SUSPICIOUS.

2. KISLOV EXPRESSED REGRET OVER AL-FATAH TERRORIST RAID NEAR TEL AVIV. HE QUIBBLED OVER DETAILS, BUT DID NOT PUT UP STRONG RESISTANCE WHEN EMBOFF TOOK FORCEFUL - LINE. HE USED ARGUMENT THAT SADAT'S MOVES HAD STRENGTHENED EXTREMIST ELEMENTS IN PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT AND HAD WEAKENED ARAFAT'S ABILITY TO DISTANCE HIMSELF AND PLO FROM THEM. HE AGREED THAT ONE RESULT OF TERRORIST RAID WOULD BE TO DESTROY SMALL GAINS WHICH PALESTINIANS HAD BEGUN TO MAKE IN AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION.

3. ASKED ABOUT SEEMING SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN TERRORISM REFLECTED IN LENGTHY ARTICLE IN MARCH 21 IZVESTIYA BY V. KUDRYAVTSEV, KISLOV SAID:

-- SOVIET POSITION ON TERRORISM WAS CONSISTENT AND WELL-KNOWN. SOVIETS WERE OPPOSED TO BOTH INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM SUCH AS THAT OF THE AL-FATAH RAID AND STATE TERRORISM SUCH AS THAT OF THE ISRAELIS;

-- KUDRYAVTSEV WAS INFLUENTIAL, BUT HE OFTEN REFLECTED HIS OWN VIEWS IN HIS COLUMNS MORE THAN DID MOST POLITICAL COLUMNISTS. HE WAS CLOSE TO THE PALESTINIANS, KNEW MANY OF THEM PERSONALLY AND PERHAPS TENDED TO OVERSTATE THEIR CASE, ESPECIALLY IN THIS ARTICLE.

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4. ASKED ABOUT A. BOVIN'S ARTICLE ON U.S. RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND SAUDI ARABIA IN MARCH 20 IZVESTIYA, KISLOV SAID ONLY THAT BOVIN WAS PROBABLY ONE OF FEW REAL INTELLECTUALS WRITING FOR CENTRAL PRESS AND THAT, WHILE HE OFTEN HAD BRILLIANT INSIGHTS AND CERTAINLY HAD A WAY WITH WORDS, HE DID NOT KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT THE M.E.

5. COMMENT: KISLOV, LIKE MOST, IF NOT ALL KNOWLEDGEABLE SOVIETS WITH WHOM EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE SPOKEN RECENTLY, SEEMED DEVOID OF NEW IDEAS. HE SAW NO WAY OUT OF CURRENT IMPASSE, SEEMED UNWILLING TO EVEN CONSIDER POSSIBLE EXISTENCE OF RAYS OF LIGHT IN PRESENT GLOOM AND, WHILE AGREEING THAT A SIMPLE RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ON THE EVE OF SADAT'S INITIATIVES WAS IMPOSSIBLE, BASICALLY OFFERED ONLY A REPETITION OF MOSCOW'S POLICY RE GENEVA AS SUMMATION OF SOVIET POLICY AT MOMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, CONSULTANTS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, TERRORISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW05560
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780129-1164
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780332/aaaabaze.tel
Line Count: 113
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 30bed7be-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3226144
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET ACADEMIC DISCUSSES M.E. SUMMARY: SOVIET M.E. EXPERT ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN AL-FATAH RAID NEAR TEL AVIV, BUT DOES NOT CONDONE IT, REFUS
TAGS: PEPR, UR, US, XF, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/30bed7be-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014